

Bill # H.B. 5014 – Support

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee of the CT Legislature
By Alberta Witherspoon, Publicly - assisted Housing Resident Network – PHRN
February 15, 2012

Hello, my name is Alberta Witherspoon. I live at 358 Orange Street, in New Haven, CT, a federal public housing complex. I am a Board member of the CT Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network – PHRN. For your information, the CT Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network is a statewide organization of public housing residents living in state public housing, federal public housing, scattered site public housing, public or private tenant-based subsidized housing and HUD-assisted public housing. We work together with our allies to address the needs and concerns of public housing residents throughout the state.

I am speaking tonight on behalf of our members in state public housing, and offer the following comments:

- Connecticut has over 13,000 units of state public housing. We can be very proud of the investment we made to build this housing. But, unlike federal public housing, the state does not provide ongoing financial support to keep this housing affordable and well-maintained.
- Governor Malloy proposes to spend \$1.5 million for 150 new Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificates. These state-funded rent subsidies work very much like the federal Section 8 program and will provide much-needed rental support.
- The Governor has also proposed a \$300 million, ten-year investment to revitalize state public housing. If we had to replace this housing, it would cost \$3 billion.
- Public housing residents and PHRN look forward to the transformation of our public housing communities. We are eager to work hand-in-hand with the state and with local housing authorities to achieve this dream.
- Last year, PHRN fought and won passage of a bill to be participants in revitalization of their public housing development. With this new law, we are all looking forward to being full partners in creating these beautiful, new communities, where safe and decent homes for our families will remain affordable to us.
- RAP certificates help assure that those who now live in state public housing, those who are struggling to survive on the lowest incomes, will be able to continue to have a home there after revitalization.

I encourage your support of the Governor's plan for revitalizing state public housing, and thank you for your time and attention this evening.